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# SERIAL WORLD



THE MASKED MARVEL ★★★ VERSUS ★★★ THE SPIDER LADY  
TWO FABULOUS ALL NEW INTERVIEWS

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★ WITH ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

**TOM STEELE AND CAROL FORMAN**

**THE "MARVEL" TELLS ALL!**

**READY FOR HER SCREEN RETURN?**







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**SPECIAL "THANKS" THIS  
ISSUE TO THE FOLLOWING  
FINE FOLKS:**

*Eric Hoffman*                      *And*  
*Jim Stringham*                  *Peter Bosch*  
*Charles McCleary*  
*Buck Rainey*  
*Norm Lynch*  
*John Roberts*  
*Universal Pictures*  
*Charles McCleary*

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# SERIAL SHOWCASE

BY JEFF WALTON  
EDITOR SERIAL  
WORLD

This is a rather SPECIAL EDITION of SERIAL WORLD. Our last issue featured many articles which we were forced to continue for this issue. Well, we've had to change plans again. Thanks to Mr. Peter Bosch of Canada and Mr. Buck Rainey, SERIAL WORLD is proud to present two super special interviews with Carol Forman and Tom Steele respectively.

Ms. Forman will be one of the honored guests at this years Memphis Film Festival coming up in July. We congratulate this wonderful serial actress on her desire to return to the screen and hope we can help her in any small way. We wish you luck BLACK WIDOW. Mr. Buck Rainey has done an outstanding job with the interview you are about to read and deserves a tip of the hat.

Mr. Bosch, an outstanding film writer has written several serial articles in the past, and this is the first piece for us. It is truly a labor of love as you will see. Peter spent many hours with veteran stuntman Tom Steele. In doing so Mr. Bosch gives us a new insight into this fascinating man. We salute Mr. Steele on his upcoming birthday and of course dedicate this issue to him.

All of our regular features will be held off until next issue. We know these rare interviews will be of interest to all of you. And once again we thank Peter Bosch and Buck Rainey. Without you serial heroes our publication would not be possible.

Believe it or not, this is our 10th anniversary. It was in May of 1974 that I first published SERIAL WORLD, which was printed by Norman Kietzer, our current publisher. We've had our ups and down over those years, but managed to bring you a publication we are proud of. With your continued support we'll CLIFFHANG around. Remember, be sure to send those clippings, photos and articles to my P.O. Box 64345, L.A. Calif. 90064, and not the Mankato address as it will only slow things down. See you all next issue!

**COVER SHOTS — COURTESY OF  
ERIC HOFFMAN**

**BACK COVER — COURTESY OF  
PETER BOSCH**



**YESTERDAY  
&  
TODAY**

**TOP — CAROL AS LASKA  
FROM "BLACKHAWK"  
BELOW — CAROL, AS  
LOVELY AS EVER  
RELAXING AT HOME.**



# CAROL FORMAN REMINISCES

By Buck Rainey



CAROL FORMAN endeared herself to serial lovers although she never played the heroine in distress. She did it by playing the villainess who strived to do away with the hero and heroine who dared to thwart her fiendish plans. Fu Man-chu had nothing on this cunning, deadly, mysterious female. Her bewitching beauty was capable of luring men's souls to the abyss of doom by the light of her wanton eyes, or of lifting their spirits with a companionable twinkling smile. Villainy was her forte. Her sexy, seductive screen persona registered well with audiences, and her talent made it all believable as she achieved serial immortality in the unforgettable roles of "The Black Widow," "Lasca," "The Spider Lady," "Nila," and "Queen Khana." Though she was a titillative, personable young woman off screen, and quite unlike the mean women she played, she made a career of being nasty both in serials and features. Television sometimes gave her a reprieve from her dastardly activities, but not often.

Because of the memorable villainesses she played, coupled with her rare beauty, I became interested in finding Miss Forman. I was curious as to why she suddenly dropped out of films in 1952. What had happened to her? Was she dead or alive? What kind of person was she? I began to think I would never find out, but finally success crowned my efforts in trying to locate her. I'll never forget our first telephone conversation. What a thrill it was to be talking to the "Black Widow" herself! We became friends, and she consented to this interview in December, 1983.

Buck: Carol, would you please tell us about your childhood. Just give us a pretty good synopsis of your "growing up" years.

Carol: A tiny little girl looked up at her mother, in the long, long ago in the never-never land south of the Mason-Dixon Line and declared, "I'm going to be a movie star." From that time on it seemed that everything in my life drew closer to that goal. I was always putting on shows, dressing up, singing, dancing. That seemed to be my whole life — standing in front of a mirror with some sort of a "get-up" on, some sort of costume pretending that I was in motion pictures or on the stage. I was very precocious. Nothing ever seemed to phase me as long as it had to do with performing.

I've been doing things to show off since possibly I was 2 years old. At age 2 years I could sing all four verses of the hymn, "Brighten the Corner," and I sang on pitch. However, they would have to put me up on a table or something, tiny as I was, so I could pretend I was on the stage and people had to look up at me. I would sing my little heart out. From that time on I was included in about everything that was given in the community or in the schools, even though I had not started to go to school, because, unlike most children at that age, I was not afraid.

We lived in Florida briefly when I was about 5 or 6 years old and at the high school some fund-raising stage show was being given. The high school principal asked my mother if I could perform. She agreed. I learned 27 typewritten pages of a monologue, "Auntie's Dress." It was all about a little girl

who puts on her aunt's clothes, shoes, makeup, and hat and parades around the stage for 27 pages, talking to herself all the time about how grown up and beautiful she is and about the dates that have taken her out and how brave she is. Then she spots a mouse in the corner and freaks out.

In school I always had the most to do on stage. My sister was pretty good too, but she was overly shy. However, we often did things together and I often took the role of a boy when the play called for a boy-girl team, while my sister took the girl's part.

I was born Carolyn Sawls in Epes, Alabama. My father, Edward Sawls, and his father before him, was a lawyer. He died when I was nine years old. My mother's name is Mrs. Annabelle Sawls, and my sister's name was Ellen. My mother raised my sister and me by herself — well, that is, with the help of my grandmother and my mother's nine brothers and sisters. That made it a little easier for her. My father was 30 or 35 years older than my mother. After he died she never married again. She supported us by running an antique store. Our house was an antebellum one that dated back about 150 years and sat on 8-10 acres of what had once been a large estate.

As I was growing up, I didn't do too much running around with other youth. But I was never lonely. I was always around experimenting with things myself. I loved to draw, and I loved to read and write fairy tales. I was a tomboy and dressed in jeans all the time. I built a platform up in the pear tree, and I would sit up there by the hour day in and out dreaming, drawing, writing, and reading.

I also climbed things. I had read *Mary Poppins*, who was always floating around with an umbrella. So I climbed up on the roof of a building and, wanting to show off for the other kids, I jumped off the roof with an umbrella. I really hit hard! I was always dreaming I could do the impossible. And as I look back over my life, I did the impossible a lot of times. For one thing I came out here and with no problems whatsoever went into motion pictures. I have known many people with a lot more to offer than I had and a lot more experience who never got started out here. So I think that sometimes, or most of the time, that if we have faith and hang on to our dreams that they will come true. I guess I must have had a lot of faith.

My last husband always liked the picture, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and he loved the book because he said that was the story of my life. He likened the little girl in the book to me. And he wasn't far wrong. I always loved animals — always had pets. I always had a dog. I love animals more than anything. I'm very concerned about them. When we lived in Florida I had a little baby alligator as a pet. It was about a foot long. And that alligator with all those teeth would let me snuggle it and dress it up. Anyone else who would come near was met by an open mouth, a hiss, and a snap. It never once did that with me. I guess I have some sort of rapport with animals. They know I love them, and I know they love me. That's all that matters.

My birthday is the 9th of June. I'm a gemini. Gemini's never grow up. They are always little children. I'm very curious still, very interested in everything. Most of my reading is factual — I don't care for fiction. I like to do anything that someone suggests. I'd rather do what other people want to do than to have them do what I want to do. I'm always worried about it when they are doing what I want to do because I'm afraid they are not enjoying it. Some sort of insecurity there.

When I was 7 or 8 years old my sister, mother, and I went to a carnival, and sometime during the time we were there this gypsy woman started staring at me. She was very, very pretty. My mother became uneasy. Finally, the gypsy approached us

and asked my mother if she could tell my fortune. Mother agreed and we went into the gypsy's tent. She told me that I was going to be a great actress, that I would grow up to be very beautiful, and that I would be a movie star. I've always remembered that. From that point on I knew my destiny. She gave me confidence that I could fulfill my dream. I've never forgotten that gypsy woman.

Buck: Thanks, Carol, for the glimpse into your youth. Could you tell us, please, how you came to enter movies.

Carol: One night my mother and I were sitting on the floor watching the fire die down preparatory to going to bed. Mother said, "I have something I want to say to you." By this time I was 15 and pretty and very popular with the boys. All the college boys from the nearby campus tried to date me, thinking I was much older. But I was too young to date them. Mother told me that as much as she loved me, and that it broke her heart to think of separation, that there was nothing down there for me and that the world was such a beautiful place and has so much to offer that I must leave. She said, "You should go to school in the summer and finish high school and then go to California and seek your career, because if you stay here you are going to just get married and never fulfill your dream and possibly never be happy. I was ready. I went to school and took extra classes. I was 16 the next year, and mother gave me money and sent me to Hollywood.

My mother is a saint, and she never believes that anyone is really going to do any harm. And although it was a dangerous thing to do, I went. Times were different then. Not so much crime as today. My mother had made some sort of arrangements with a singing teacher, and I moved in with her and became her student. I took drama lessons as well and became involved in little theatre. Even after I became a contract player I continued to do little theatre. But after two years the studio made me stop because I was not getting enough rest. They want you fresh as a daisy when you appear before the camera.

I did a lot of intimate (theatre-in-the-round) theatre work and found it to be excellent preparation for movie work.





I was appearing in "The Philadelphia Story," playing Julia, the nasty sister. It seems I always played nasty people. But I got the feel of the meaty performance the villainess can have. It is much more rewarding than having to go around being sweet all the time. It gets more attention and is more fun to do. Maybe that is why people remember, me, because of the villains I have played. I can't analyze it any other way. I hope I can come back doing more-or-less the same sort of villainess I portrayed in **The Black Widow**, **Superman**, or **Blackhawk**.

While working in the little theatres an agent spotted me, and I got a little insignificant part in **From This Day Forward** at RKO. I was at a desk or something and I was so frightened, so confused with all that equipment around. I really wanted to just sit down and cry and go back home to Alabama. I didn't know what the camera looked like. I didn't know where it was. The director was very, very patient with me, and even though it was hard for me to get on to my mark and to do exactly what he asked, I finally did it. Consequently, they printed the scene with my 3 or 4 lines and that is how I got my first contract. They saw something they liked and put me under contract shortly after watching the rushes. It was the usual seven-year contract with six-month options. I was there for a year.

Buck: What was it like at RKO?

Carol: All the time I was at the studio I got to have the best singing coach and best drama coach. I had actual training on camera with small parts in big pictures. I had the opportunity of making tests with others who were being considered for contracts. I worked all the time, which helped to give me a feeling of relaxation before the camera because it didn't matter much what I did. We weren't important in these screen tests — only the person being tested.

One of my greatest thrills was getting to watch the big stars work. Mostly they didn't allow anyone on the sets. If a star was having trouble with a scene, they would close the set. No one would be allowed in. But it just seems — maybe that angel was doing it — that I could get in these closed sets. I would find a box or something to sit on and quietly watch. I remember once sitting on a big coil of huge rope for hours, and by the end of the day it was so hard and my bottom was so sore. Back of the sets on a sound stage it is very dark, and so I'd sit just at the beginning of the light. They knew I was there. Sometimes they would come over and say something to me or they would ask me if I wanted a cup of coffee. But for some reason they never had me thrown off the set. So I had the advantage somehow of getting to sneak in and watch all the big ones work. Sometimes in engaging them in conversation they would drop little pearls about their acting. Most of the time the advice they would give was to just relax and feel the part, to become the character. As I watched them off screen and saw what they did on screen, I knew that is exactly what they did, because they were different off screen than they were on screen.

Buck: Did you get to know any of the big RKO stars?

Carol: Yes, people such as Sir Laurence Olivier, Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman, Henry Fonda, John Wayne, Jane Russell, Robert Mitchum. I used to have lunch on occasion with Mitchum in the studio commissary. He had just become a star and was an exceptionally nice person. Raymond Burr and I almost became a team, as we acted in so many things together — both playing bad persons. Others I knew well were Tim Holt, Dick Martin, Martha Hyer, Franchot Tone, and Tom Conway. I did a couple pictures with Conway. In fact I was in a lot of things at this point and was getting some meaty parts in B pictures. One of the persons who impressed me the most was Jack Parr. Everybody knew that this young man was going to go on to be really great. He was always



writing in his head. We would be at a table eating and he would stop the conversation and ask, "What do you think about this?" and go into one of his jokes.

Buck: I think our readers would be especially interested in hearing about Tim Holt. Would you comment on him?

Carol: Yes. I had been in love with Tim Holt before I came to Hollywood. I thought he was just the prettiest, cutest thing that could ever be. So while I was at the studio I was called to the producer's office one afternoon to talk about a part in a picture, and I walked in and looked right into the face of Tim Holt. And what kept my legs under me I'll never know, for I went weak all over. They had me penciled in for a part in his picture. I said "yes, I would like to do it." After the interview I went out into the hall and started down it when a door further down the corridor opened and there stood Tim, who had existed a different way. "By the way," he said, "can you mount?" "What do you mean?" I replied. He laughed and said, "No, you can't mount. That's all right, though, we'll cover it. We'll shoot around it somehow. I'll show you how to get on." You can imagine my thrill at being in a picture with Tim when he was my idol. It was so much fun to work with Tim and Dick Martin. They were two of the nicest people in the world. Naturally, being around Tim, who I already idolized, caused me to fall in love with him, and as time went along he fell in love with me. For two-and-a-half years we were an item.

At that time Tim was married but was separated from his wife. I never saw her, nor apparently did Tim. Everybody thought we would get married, and we did make such plans but they never materialized. Tim was anti-social, and I felt the need for people. Most of his outgoing personality was confined to the studio and his films. If we would go out to eat, he would try to find the darkest corner to sit in or would sit with his back to the room. He had a big, big complex caused in part, I think, by his relationship with his dad and his mother.

But I won't go into that now. But speaking of his dad, Tim said that Jack had told him that he was being paid a lot of money to do very little and to always know his lines and be on time and always cooperate. And Tim did just that. He was a dedicated actor. He never caused any trouble at all. He was a pleasure, but I realized that there were personality differences between us that would have caused conflict had we married, so we split up. Tim was beset with some personal problems shortly afterwards and his movie career at RKO ended.

Buck: Did you like making serials?

Carol: The serials in the business were looked down on. You only did serials strictly for the money, which wasn't too much, depending on your experience and the parts you did. I believe that most I ever made on a serial was \$500 a week, which was for **The Black Widow**. That ran for 6 weeks, which was good for a serial. Serials were known as "bread-and-butter" pictures. I loved them. I still do. I wish I could do them again. To think that they were so looked down upon at the time and that today they are basically what we see on TV. Most of the TV programs today — **Dynasty**, **Dallas**, **Knotts Landing**, **Falconcrest**, etc. are cliffhangers. Tune in next week and see what happens to so-and-so. It's not very different to the serials, just less action and more talk.

A lot of big stars came out of serials. Big studios didn't want people to know their stars had ever been associated with serials and would try to keep the public from knowing. But I was naive and didn't care. I was glad to be working and enjoyed it. I think they are the most fun of all. I remember we shot fast. I turned down more serials than I made. After I had gone with a new agent I turned down three serials in one week. I wish I hadn't. I could have become a real serial queen had I just done one, but my agent wouldn't let me.

I was a fast learner. The could hand me new pages of dialogue — they were always changing it, you know — just before a scene was to be shot and I could learn it quickly and not muff the scene. That was a good trait for serial performers and perhaps one reason I was in demand.

Buck: Did you go to see yourself on screen?

Carol: I didn't see many serials. I did see **The Black Widow** in the dailies on the studio lot. Later on TV I saw **The Black Widow** feature version. In fact, about anything I was in I saw on TV later rather than at the time I made it. Once I went to New York and I had never seen the Rocketts. They had a matinee on a Saturday at the Roxy. So I decided I would go see them. I walked into the theatre, and I looked and almost fainted because there was a huge cutout of me in the **Black Widow** outfit looking mean and holding a gun. This cutout was standing right in the middle of the lobby. So I got to see a chapter of it right there at the Roxy in New York. After the show I went to the ladies room and there were some teenage girls there who had come to the theatre expressly to see the serial. They were talking and were excited, and they were wondering what in the world I was going to do the next week. They were going on about the whole thing, and I was enthralled. I'm standing right there by them and they didn't even know what I was. I thought maybe I should say, "Boo, here I am," but I've never done things like that. I'm not very pushy of myself. I think I need to learn to be, however. My husband died about five years ago, and I'm all alone now. It has sort of left me hanging, dangling.

Buck: Did you have to do any stunts or participate in potentially dangerous scenes while making the serials?

Carol: No, I never did any stunts. I had a couple of bad things happen. One was in **The Black Widow**. They handed me a gun for the first time, and I was playing with it trying to learn how to handle it so I'd feel more comfortable with it. I pulled the trigger and shot a man in the hand. It was a blank,



but blanks have a wad that can burn at close range. I saw the man in the market 30 years later, and in looking at his hand I could still see where the burn was.

I think it was in **Brick Bradford** that I wore that little flimsy costume. I almost froze to death because we went up to Lone Pine in the middle of winter to shoot that thing and I was out in that freezing weather standing up on sand dunes or something in this little piece of gauze. It was miserable, just absolutely miserable. I thought I would die. Kane Richmond was so charming and handsome. I developed a crush on him.

I did some Cisco Kid westerns for TV. I believe we did four at one time. I was doing the good girl in these, and it was fun. I had a chance sometimes to use my southern accent. They were shot up at Pioneer Town in the mountains above Palm Springs.

They took me out on location. I was in my dressing room and the door burst open and there stood Frank Matz, the wrangler on the picture. He said, "Are you going to drive that





buckboard?" I answered, "Yes, I guess I am." "My God, nobody told me this," exclaimed Frank. "Don't they have a double for you?" I replied, "I don't know. They told me they were going to double me." "Well, I've got news for you," exclaimed Frank. "You have no double, and I've been out here since six o'clock whipping that team up and down the road (the scene called for a runaway team) and they're as wild as they can be. There's no way in the world a woman can hold that team, and especially you because you don't know anything about horses." Frank went into conference with the director and refused to let me do it. They argued, but Frank kept saying I'd be killed if I tried it. They finally drilled some holes in the buckboard and Frank lay down spreadeagle on his stomach with one foot tied to each side of the buckboard. Two sets of extra reigns were fed through the holes. Frank's head and shoulders were hidden by the buckboard seat. He told me I'd have to guide the horses because he couldn't see. We got into the buckboard on a little narrow rocky road way up the hill. The scene was that the buckboard was running away with me and the two riders were to overtake the buckboard and split — one going on one side and the other to the opposite side and advancing to catch the lead horses and stop them.

Well, I saw Marshall Reed go by on my left. We were going like mad and hitting rocks. I thought, "Oh, my God, we're going to turn over." Luckily, Frank had put the brake on the buckboard on a little bit to slow it down slightly. All of a sudden all hell broke loose. I thought the buckboard had broken in two. I glanced over my right shoulder and saw the horse's head practically touching me. The buckboard was lurching, and I thought the horse had gotten caught between the wheels. His head was right on my shoulder. What had happened was that the horse had seen a rock overhanging the road and had jumped into the buckboard with me. I didn't know it, but the seat broke and went down on Frank. The lurching part of it was that the horse had gotten its leg caught in the spokes of the wheel so that as the wheel would turn he would lurch, which may have prevented him from ploughing right over me. It all happened so quickly I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know the horse was in the wagon. I felt

the wagon right itself, and I glanced back just in time to see the horse and rider flip over backward into the road behind. Marshall Reed stopped the team by turning them into the wall. It was the closest I have come to being killed or seriously injured. The rider and horse were just skinned up a little, and we didn't have to destroy the horse at all.

I remember on the last day of shooting at the studio that Duncan Renaldo said, "I want to give you some advice. Don't ever be a good sport in this business. Your life is at stake. If they doublecross you this way and not send a double for you, you refuse to do it. I've seen it happen so many times. Girls will go on and take a chance and get hurt and believe me, the studios will not stand behind you. You'll never get a dime out of them." So I've never done another stunt.

Buck: Any comments on some of the people you worked with in serials?

Carol: Kirk Alyn was a very nice, wonderful person. However, I don't think Noel Neill ever spoke to me. She didn't seem very friendly. Of course, everybody loved Roy Barcroft. Rosemary LaPlanche was very sweet, very down to earth and pretty. Anthony Warde was very sweet too. And I simply loved Stan Jolley. He was one of the finest gentlemen I have ever known. He was a very dear, wonderful man. I started out with Virginia Lindley in little theatre, so we were good friends.

Buck: You said that you were at RKO for a year. What brought about your contract termination there?

Carol: I was really getting good treatment there, and they seemed to be grooming me for better things. All of the "B" pictures come under one executive producer. One afternoon this producer sent me a note requesting my presence in his office at two o'clock. So I showed up at this big luxurious office. He starts telling me how beautiful I am and the big plans they have for me and how satisfied the studio is with my work. He indicated he felt more for me than he did the other girls on the lot and that he liked my type and so forth. He tells me he has this apartment that no one knows about where he goes to relax in the afternoons. As he talked I could see a picture of his wife and children prominently displayed on his

desk. He said he thought maybe I'd like to go relax with him, and we could dance and have a few drinks. Well, I'm stunned. After all, I'm from Alabama, and at the time, at least to my knowledge, people didn't do that where I came from.

I said, "Oh, no, I couldn't do that at all." He replied that he would really like to hold me and caress me. I thought, "Oh, my God, what am I into!" I mustered up all my sophistication and informed him that I was engaged to be married. I thought surely that would stop him, but he didn't even blink an eye. He didn't think that had anything to do with it, and the conversation went on and he got a little more graphic about what he expected. I said, "No, I can't do something like that." Well, this man had always been so gracious to me on the lot when he would see me. After this incident he never again acknowledged my presence. Even in a group he would look the other way. It hurt my feelings, and I didn't know what to do. I told my drama coach about it, and she said that the studio was going to drop me because this producer had axed me and that I wasn't the first one it had happened to. So that is how I lost my contract.

But there was retribution. A little time after that I was dating a man associated with Howard Hughes. I happened to tell him the story one evening and he told Howard about it. Evidently Howard didn't go for things like that, so one morning this producer showed up at RKO to go to his offices and the gate was locked against him. The guard had been told not to let him in. All of the producer's personal effects were sitting out on the back parking lot. He was never allowed on that lot again. And as far as I know, he has never done anything in motion pictures again. So you see why I loved Howard Hughes. I met him on several occasions and found him to be a most charming, nice man. He was always very polite and gracious. I remember that at a dinner party somewhat later he came over to me and asked, "Well, Carol Forman, how is your career going?" I said, "It is doing just fine. Everything is going along okay." "Having any more producer problems?" he asked. I replied, "No sir, not any." So he was kind of letting me know that he had taken care of the one I did have.

Buck: From what you said about the buckboard incident, I take it you were not too familiar with horses.

Carol: I enjoyed riding horseback as a girl until I fell. I was racing on a horse and the saddle turned and I fell and was unconscious for four hours, so I've been afraid of horses ever since. It seems that everytime I get around a horse he starts acting up right away. I don't even have to get on him. And if I do get on him they usually have to hook a wire in his bit and a wrangler lies on his stomach under the horse holding the horse's head down to keep him from bucking me off.

Buck: Would you care to comment on your marriages?

Carol: I had relatives in Memphis and we used to go up there to visit my aunt and uncle. After I was out here a little while I went back there on a visit and met Robert B. (Red) Forman. We were married, even though he was 20-25 years older than me. He was an Air Force flyer. I think he is a retired three-star general now. Our marriage didn't stand a chance, as his business kept him elsewhere, and I wasn't about to leave here. But we have remained close and there is no bitterness. He was good to me and looked after me when I was a pretty green kid.

Later I met a man, married him, and divorced him within six months. He was a writer and drama critic in Jackson, Florida. Colonel Tom Parker had brought him to California and they had some kind of public relations organization. I had married on the rebound. It was a mistake.



**Carol as "Nila" in *Federal Agents vs. Underworld Inc.***

My third and last marriage was to William Dennis, who had been an associate director with Russell Hayden Productions out of Phoenix and who also had worked with Dick Powell at Four Star Productions. One day I had parked my car and was walking up to my apartment out in the San Fernando Valley when Bill drove by and saw me. He parked his car and proceeded to rent an apartment as close to mine as possible, having decided, as he told me, to marry me — just like that. I didn't like him and wouldn't even speak to him for the longest, but he really pursued me. Eventually I was tricked into a double date with him and found him to be quite nice and a lot of fun. We eventually married. Shortly thereafter his ex-wife moved out and abandoned his three young daughters whose custody she had. I had never wanted children and had made that clear before Bill and I were married. However I couldn't very well throw the children to the wolves. No one on his side of the family or his ex-wife's side would take them. So that's what I did, I raised three little girls and forgot all about Hollywood. We lived in the Texas area until about 7 years ago when Bill's health became so poor. We moved back here, where he had several heart attacks and died about 5 years ago. The hospital bills and other expenses took all of our savings and things have been kind of rough for me since. A year later my sister died. My brother-in-law and niece also passed away. I only have my mother now.

My youngest daughter, Debbie, is married to an Air Force man and living in Dayton, Ohio. Susie and Lee are out here. Susie has done extra work on "Days of Our Lives." Lee lives with me and is a great companion. Both are aspiring actresses.

Buck: Any regrets about having become an actress?

Carol: Absolutely not! It was all like a fairy tale, like a



dream come true. Who from a small town in Alabama could come to Hollywood and in six months have a contract at a major studio and be doing good parts? It was a dream come true, and it was heandled that way. It was all baffling to me, as if I had been pushed into something — sort of like Alice in Wonderland. It was a marvelous, marvelous life and anyone who aspires to this type of thing, motion pictures or TV, I say go for it. Don't ever give up because you'll be very sorry if you do and nothing else in life will ever make you happy if you don't pursue it. A lot of people have gone on to other things, but when you meet them and talk to them they still get a faraway look in their eyes. This is the most exciting industry there is, in my opinion. The people are interesting and not ever dull, and that is what I fight in life — dullness.

Buck: You mention being in several Cisco Kid TV segments. What other television work did you do?

Carol: I was in quite a few things. I did 3 episodes of **File of Jeffrey Jones**, two segments of the **Loretta Young Show**, one **77 Sunset Strip**, one **Dr. Hudson's Secret Journal**, and some other things I can't recall right at the moment. Also, I made

itches on live TV for civic causes, did some modeling on TV, and even sang once on TV. I made a few commercials too. I kept busy.

Buck: What are your plans now?

Carol: I'm determined to resume my acting career. I know that lightning may not strike twice, that it is hard to break back into the business. But I think I have the talent and perseverance to do it. I'm looking for that first break.

Buck: I hope you make it, Carol. You're a mighty nice person, and I would like to see you on screen again. I know your many fans will be looking forward to seeing you at the Memphis Film Festival this summer.

Carol: Thank you, Buck. I, too, am looking forward to the Memphis Film Festival, to seeing you there, and to meeting a lot of nice people. It will be a thrilling experience for me.

### **CAROL'S FILMOGRAPHY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE**



**Vivacious Carol Forman today. Quite an animal lover, here she poses with her 14 year old pet "Little Man."**

**CAROL FORMAN  
PARTIAL FILMOGRAPHY**

**DILLINGER**

(Monogram, March, 1945) 70 Mins.  
Edmund Lowe, Anne Jeffreys, Lawrence Tierney, Eduardo Ciannelli, Marc Lawrence, Elisha Cook, Jr., Ralph Lewis, Ludwig Stossel, Else Janssen, Hugh Prosser, Dewey Robinson, Bob Perry, Kid Chisel, Billy Nelson, Lee (Lasses) White, Lou Lubin, Carol Forman  
D: Max Mosseck  
SP: Phil Yordan  
P: King Brothers

**FROM THIS DAY FORWARD**

(RKO Radio, February, 1946) 95 Mins.  
Joan Fontaine, Mark Stevens, Rosemary DeCamp, Henry Morgan, Wally Brown, Arline Judge, Renny McEvoy, Bobby Driscoll, Mary Treen, Queenie Smith, Doreen McCann, Erskine Sanford, Carol Forman  
D: John Berry  
SP: Hugo Butler  
Adapt: Garson Kanin  
Based on a novel by Thomas Bell  
P: William Pereira

**FOLLOW THAT BLONDE**

(RKO Radio, September 27, 1946) 2 Reels  
Leon Errol, Harry Harvey, Claire Carleton, Phil Warren, Marian Carr, Dick Elliott, Carol Forman, Teddy Infuhr  
D: Hal Yates

**NOCTURNE**

(RKO Radio, November 9, 1946) 87 Mins.  
George Raft, Lynn Bari, Virginia Huston, Joseph Pevney, Myrna Dell, Edward Ashley, Walter Sande, Mabel Paige, Bernard Hoffman, Queenie Smith, Mack Gray, Greta Granstedt, Lillian Bond, Carol Forman, Harry Harvey  
D: Edwin L. Marin  
SP: Jonathan Latimer  
S: Frank Fenton, Rowland Brown  
Exec. P: Jack J. Gross

**THE FALCON'S ADVENTURE**

(RKO Radio, 1946) 61 Mins.  
Tom Conway, Madge Meredith, Edward S. Brophy, Robert Warwick, Myrna Dell, Steve Brodie, Ian Wolfe, Carol Forman, Joseph Crehan, Phil Warren, Tony Barrett, Harry Harvey, Jason Robards, Dave Sharpe  
D: William Berke  
SP: Aubrey Wisberg  
P: Herman Schlom

**CODE OF THE WEST**

(RKO Radio, February 2, 1947) 57 Mins.  
James Warren, Debra Alden, John Laurence, Robert Clarke, Steve Brodie, Rita Lynn, Carol Forman, Harry Woods, Raymond Burr, Harry Harvey, Phil Warren, Emmett Lynn  
D: William Berke  
SP: Norman Houston  
S: Zane Grey  
P: Herman Schlom

**GUNSMOKE**

(Standard Pictures/Astor, March 8, 1947)  
Nick Stuart, Carol Forman, Robert Garden, Craig Lawrence, Marie Harmon, Clark Bush, Lee "Stormy" Weather, Smokey Joe LaDue, Curley Fletcher, Lorraine Jensen, Danny Dowling, Lee Carling, Charlie Quirk, Bill Jones  
D: Fred King  
SP: Reg Browne  
P: Fred Walker  
(Distributed in the Southwest and Southeast by Astor as "Gunsmoke Killers")

**WIFE TAMES WOLF**

(RKO Radio, April 25, 1947) 2 Reels  
Leon Errol, Dorothy Granger, Eddie Kane, Carol Forman, Phil Warren, Peggy Mailey, Barbara Smith  
D: Hal Yates

**HONEYMOON**

(RKO Radio, April, 1947) 74 mins.  
Shirley Temple, Franchot Tone, Guy Madison, Lina Romay, Gene Lockhart, Corinna Mura, Grant Mitchell, Julio Villalca, Manuel Arvide, Jose R. Goula, Carol Forman  
D: William Keighley  
SP: Michael Kanin  
Based on story by Vicki Baum  
P: Warren Duff

**DESPERATE**

(RKO Radio, May 20, 1947) 73 Mins.  
Steve Brodie, Audrey Long, Raymond Burr, Douglas Fowley, William Challee, Jason Robards, Sr., Freddie Steele, Lee Frederick, Paul E. Burns, Ika Gruning, Larry Nunn, Robert Bray, Carl Kent, Carol Forman, Erville Alderson, Teddy Infuhr, Pete Landers, Ralte Harold, Kay Christopher, Bill Wallace, Carl Saxe, Grahame Covent, Jay Norris, Milt Kibbee, Dick Elliot, Charles Flynn, Ernie Adams, Don Kerry, Jack Bailey, Frank O'Connor, Hans Herbert  
D: Anthony Mann  
SP: Harry Essex, Martin Rackin  
S: Anthony Mann  
P: Michel Kraike

**THE BLACK WIDOW**

(Republic, June, 1947) 13 Chapters  
Bruce Edwards, Virginia Lindley, Carol Forman, Anthony Warde, I. Stanford Jolley, Ramsay Ames, Theodore Gottlieb, Virginia Carroll, Gene Stutenroth, Ernie Adams, Tom Steele, Dale Van Sickle, Maxine Doyle, LeRoy Mason, Sam Flint, George Douglas, Robert Barron, Carey Loftin, Bud Wolfe, Hal Landon, Robert Wilke, Peggy Wynne, Duke Green, Stanley Price, Forrest Taylor, Larry Steers, Ted Mapes  
D: Spencer Bennet and Fred C. Brannon  
SP: Franklin Adreon, Basil Dickey, Jesse Duffy, Sol Shor  
AP: Mike Frankovich  
Chapter Titles: (1) Deadly Prophecy (2) The Stolen Formula (3) Hidden Death (4) Peril in the Sky (5) The Spider's Lair (6) The Glass Guillotine (7) Wheels of Death (8) False Information (9) The Spider's Venom (10) The Stolen Corpse (11) Death Dials a Number (12) The Talking Mirror (13) A Life for a Life

**UNDER THE TONTO RIM**

(RKO Radio, August 1, 1947) 61 Mins.  
Tim Holt, Nan Leslie, Richard Martin, Richard Powers (Tom Keene), Carol Forman, Tom Barrett, Harry Harvey, Jason Robards, Sr., Lex Barker, Robert Clarke, Jay Norris, Steve Savage, Herman Hack  
D: Lew Lander  
SP: Norman Houston  
S: Zane Grey  
P: Herman Schlom

**BRICK BRADFORD**

(Columbia, 1947) 15 Chapters  
Kane Richmond, Rick Vallin, Linda Johnson, Pierre Watkin, Charles Quigley, Carol Forman, Jack Ingram, Fred Graham, Wheeler Oakman, Leonard Penn, John Merton, Charles King, John Hart, Helene Stanley, Nelson Leigh, Robert Barron, George DeNormand, Noel Neill, Stanley Blystone, Frank Ellis, Al Ferguson  
D: Spencer G. Bennet  
SP: George H. Plympton, Arthur Noerl, Lewis Clay  
Based upon the newspaper feature, "Brick Bradford"  
P: Sam Katzman  
Chapter Titles: (1) Atomic Defense (2) Flight to the Moon (3) Prisoners of the Moon (4) Into the Volcano (5) Bradford at Bay (6) Back to Earth (7) Into Another Century (8) Buried Treasure (9) Trapped in the Time Top (10) The Unseen Hand (11) Poison Gas (12) Door of Disaster (13) Sinister Rendezvous (14) River of Revenge (15) For the Peace of the World

**SUPERMAN**

(Columbia, 1948) 15 Chapters  
Kirk Alyn, Noel Neill, Carol Forman, Tommy Bond, Pierre Watkin, George Meeker, Jack Ingram, Terry Frost, Charles Quigley, Herbert Rawlinson, Forrest Taylor, Stephen Carr, Charles King, Rusty Wescoatt, Nelson Leigh, Luana Walters, Robert Barron, Edward Cassidy, Virginia Carroll, Alan Dinehart III, Ralph Hodges, Jack George, Tom London, Rube Schaefer, Stanley Price, Paul Stader, Reed Howes, Leonard Penn, Gene Roth  
D: Spencer G. Bennet and Thomas Carr  
SP: Arthur Hoerl, Lewis Clay, Royal Cole  
Adapt: George H. Plympton and Joseph F. Poland  
P: Sam Katzman  
Chapter Titles: (1) Superman Comes to Earth (2) Depths of the Earth (3) The Reducer Ray (4) Man of Steel (5) A Job for Superman (6) Superman in Danger (7) Into the Electrical Furnace (8) Superman to the Rescue (9) Irresistible Force (10) Between Two Fires (11) Superman's Dilemma (12) Blast in the Depths (13) Hurlled to Destruction (14) Superman at Bay (15) The Payoff

**DOCKS OF NEW ORLEANS**

(Monogram, 1948) 64 Mins.  
Roland Winters, Virginia Dale, Mantan Moreland, John Gallaudet, Victor Sen Young, Carol Forman, Douglas Fowley, Harry Hayden, Howard Negley, Stanley Andrews, Emmett Vogan, Boyd Irwin, Rory Mallinson, George J. Lewis  
D: Derwin Abrahams  
SP: W. Scott Darling  
P: James S. Burkett

**THE FEATHERED SERPENT**

(Monogram, 1948) 68 Mins.  
Roland Winters, Keye Luke, Victor Sen Yung, Mantan Moreland, Robert Livingston, Martin Garralaga, Nils Asther, Carol Forman, Beverly Jons, George J. Lewis, Leslie Dennison, Jay Silverheels  
D: William Beaudine  
SP: Oliver Drake  
S: Oliver Drake  
P: James S. Burkett

**THE MOZART STORY**

(Screen Guild, November, 1948) 91 Mins.  
Hans Holt, Winnie Markus, Irene V. Meyendorff, Rene Deligen, Edward Vedder, Wilton Graff, Carol Forman, Anthony Barr, Walther Janssen, Rosa Albach-Retty, Anita Rosar, Thea Weiss, Curd Juergens, Paul Hoerbiger, John Siebert, Richard Eybner, Eric Nicowitz, Theo Danegger, Fred Imhoff, Carl Blumh  
D: Karl Hartl  
SP: Richard Billinger  
P: Abraham Haimson

**FEDERAL AGENTS VS. UNDERWORLD, INC.**  
(Republic, January, 1949) 12 Chapters

Kirk Alyn, Rosemary LePlanche, Carol Forman, Ray Barcroft, James Dale, Bruce Edwards, James Craven, Tris Coffin, Jack O'Shea, Dale Van Sickle, Tom Steele, Marshall Reed, Robert Wilke, Art Dillard, Dave Sharpe, Dave Anderson, Carey Loftin, Post Parks, Joe Yrigoyen, Bud Wolfe, Duke Taylor, Ken Terrell  
D: Fred C. Brannon  
SP: Royal K. Cole, Basil Dickey, William Lively, Sol Shor  
AP: Franklin Adreon  
Chapter Titles: (1) The Golden Hands (2) The Floating Coffin (3) Death in the Skies (4) Fatal Evidence (5) The Trapped Conspirator (6) Wheels of Disaster (7) The Hidden Key (8) The Enemy's Mouthpiece (9) The Stolen Hand (10) Unmasked (11) Tombs of the Ancients (12) The Curse of Kurigal

**BROTHERS IN THE SADDLE**

(RKO Radio, February 8, 1949) 60 Mins.  
Tim Holt, Richard Martin, Steve Brodie, Virginia Cox, Carol Forman, Richard Powers (Tom Keene), Stanley Andrews, Robert Bray, Francis McDonald, Emmett Vogan, Monte Montague  
D: Lesley Selander  
SP: Norman Houston  
P: Herman Schlom

**OH, SUSANNA**

(Republic, March 3, 1951) 90 Mins.  
Rod Cameron, Adrian Booth, Forrest Tucker, Chill Wills, William Ching, Jim Davis, Wally Cassell, Douglas Kennedy, James Lydon, William Haade, John Compton, James Flavin, Charles Stevens, Alan Bridge, Marion Randolph, Marshall Reed, John Pickard, Ruth Brennan, Louise Kane, Carol Forman  
D: Joseph Kane  
SP: Charles Marquis Warren  
AP: Joseph Kane

**BLACKHAWK**

(Columbia, 1952) 15 Chapters  
Kirk Alyn, Carol Forman, John Crawford, Michael Fox, Don C. Harvey, Rick Vallin, Larry Stewart, Weaver Levy, Zon Murray, Nick Stuart, Marshall Reed, Pierce Lyden, William Fawcett, Terry Frost, Rory Mallinson, Frank Ellis, Jack Mulhall, Frank Gerstle, Dave Sharpe  
D: Spencer G. Bennet and Fred Sears  
SP: George H. Plympton, Royal K. Cole, Sherman L. Lowe  
Based on the "Blackhawk" comic magazine created by Reed Crandall  
P: Sam Katzman  
Chapter Titles: (1) Distress Call From Space (2) Blackhawk Traps a Traitor (3) In the Enemy's Hideout (4) The Iron Monster (5) Human Targets (6) Blackhawk's Leap for Life (7) Mystery Fuel (8) Blasted From the Sky (9) Blackhawk Tempers Fate (10) Chase for Element X (11) Forced Down (12) Drums of Doom (13) Blackhawk's Daring Plan (14) Blackhawk's Wild Ride (15) The Leader Unmasked

**BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVER MOON**

(Warner Bros., March, 1953) 101 Mins.  
Doris Day, Gordon McRae, Leon Ames, Rosemary DeCamp, Billy Gray, Mary Wickes, Russell Arms, Carol Forman, John Maxwell  
D: David Butler  
SP: Robert O'Brien, Irving Elinson  
Suggested by Booth Tarkinton's Penrod Stories  
P: William Jacobs





# A TRIBUTE TO TOM STEELE

Compiled by Peter Bosch

*On this happy occasion of your 75th birthday in June (with over 50 years of your life spent entertaining and thrilling us), we here at SERIAL WORLD and you many fans wish to honor you. You've always been the invisible man on the screen and one who in private is embarrassed by applause and flattery, but the time has come for us to tell you that we are thankful to have known you. We pay tribute to you. Happy birthday!*

Here is how three of your former co-workers remember you:



***"Tom Steele was a very sincere person, a very dedicated person. And a good friend."***  
**George J. Lewis**

***"He's wonderful, absolutely wonderful. There really wasn't anybody who was as nice and would go out of their way to be helpful."***  
**Linda Stirling**



***"He was quick and sharp and knew just exactly what he was doing. He was just a delight all the time, a super individual."***  
**Louise Currie**



# UNMASKING THE MASKED MARVEL

by Peter Bosch



CONTINUED AFTER ADVERTISING SECTION...





# BOOK-CLUB





# A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

by Norman H. Kietzer

These pages constitute the special advertising section of our publications — specifically Serial World #37, Serial World Reprint #10, Matinee #4, and Favorite Westerns #18. This section is also sent separately to all of the 4,000 plus other people on our mailing list.

Because we still have plenty of copies of our last book club catalog available and all of you who have already received a copy of it, we will not be printing a section of the entire listings of what we have available in this issue, but only a listing of what new items we now have in stock. If anyone wishes a copy of our complete catalog just write and we will send it.

If anyone wishes to place an advertisement in our next section, please send it to me by July 1st, 1984. The terms and rates for our special package remain the same.

Full Page .....	\$75.00
Half Page .....	\$37.50
Quarter Page .....	\$26.00

When you place an advertisement with us it will be run in all of our publications over a three month period. That means the total circulation that your ad will receive will be in 1,500 copies of Serial World,

1,500 copies of Favorite Westerns, 1,000 copies of Matinee, and as a bonus in over 4,000 copies of the special brochure consisting of our advertising section that is mailed to all other customers who have ever purchased items from us every three months. So your total circulation of an advertisement placed with us is 8,000 plus — for one time cost only. One of the best bargains available to reach potential customers in the Serial/Western field.

The purpose of our book club and video tape club offerings and of our advertising is to support our publishing efforts through any revenue gained from those efforts, and to attempt to become your one source for all kinds of material related to the areas that our magazines cover.

If you wish to order subscriptions, books or video tapes or to advertise in our magazine just send your orders to Kietzer Publishing Co., P.O. Box 3325, Mankato, Minnesota 56002. We thank you for your support.

## UNCLASSIFIED ADS

**Unclassified ads cost 10¢ per word including address — \$2.00 minimum.**

Serial and Western items for sale. Also Movie and Western Comic Books, Action and Western Pulp, James Bond, Dark Shadows, TV Avengers, U.N.C.L.E., TV Guides, Playboys, TV, Western, Movie, and Serial Magazines, Games, Toys, Paperbacks, Hardcover Books, Radio and Cereal Premiums, Gum Cards, Hardcover Books, Doc Savage, Movie and Serial Posters, Pressbooks, Photos, Etc., 1920 thru 1984 Catalogues \$1.00. Howard Rogofsky, Box S107, Glen Oaks, NY 11004.

Catalogue of Photos from TV Shows \$1.00. Many Westerns — Color & Black & White. Movie Collectables, 6679 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028.

Albums-Tapes. Rare recordings from 1888-80s Rodgers, Acuff, Dalhart, Carters, Stanleys, Cooley, Kincaid, Poole, Callahans, Wakeley, Jones, Mainers, Glosson, Raney, Wills, O'Day, Puckett, Autry, Macon, Travis, Robinson, Wiseman, Karl-Hary, Lombardo, Allen, Foley, Owens, Davis, Coopers, Monroes, Bond, Crosby, Osbornes. Huge catalog of 1000s, \$3.00. Country Sales, Box 866-KP, Hot Springs, Arkansas 71902.

World's Greatest Ole Time Country-Bluegrass songbook. Huge book of over 500 most requested songs. With guitar, banjo, mandolin chords, tunings. Only \$16.98 Postpaid any country. Country Sales, Box 866-KP, Hot Springs Arkansas 71902.

Attention Western Fans: 10-35MM regular size beautiful color photos of Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. These pictures are from the backs of Comic Books, many with their horses, \$5.50 ppd. Send money orders only to: Tony Lorio, 5024 Kawanee Avenue, Metairie, LA 70002.

For Sale: Complete set of "Those Enduring Matinee Idols" No. 1 to 29 plus index to issues No. 1 to 26, \$300.00 for set. Also "Serials of Columbia, Serial Quarterly No. 1 to 7, \$55.00 each. Also selling other movie books, magazines send 50¢ for list to: F.R. Buccigrossi, 800 E. Pittsburgh, No. Versailles, PA 15137.

Jean Rogers — Want information on lovely Jean Rogers, "Flash Gordon" serial queen actress, 1936. Write: Jett Martin, 159 Maitland Avenue, Paterson, NJ 07502.

Western Hero Collectibles — over 300 original items for Tom Mix, Lone Ranger, Gene, Roy, Hoppy and others in our quarterly mail bid auction, sample \$2.00, Hake's Americana, P.O.B. 1444FW, York, PA 17405.

Record albums featuring Rex Allen, Gene Autry, Patsy Montana, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers, Sons of the Pioneers, and other singing cowboys from yesteryear to present. Hard to find Western cowboy record albums is our specialty! Catalog \$2.00. Sounds of the Old West, 3210-KP Terry Drive, Toledo, OH 43613.

Western Movie Stars! 80 drawings of the cowboy stars as they appeared in Real West Magazine. These have been reduced to 8½ x 11 for scrapbook or framing. A real collector's item \$10.75 (includes the postage and handling). Mario DeMarco, 152 Maple, W. Boylston, MA 01583.

Penny Arcade Cards (original) Western Stars from Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Tim McCoy, Hoot Gibson & others. Only \$11.00 set of 32 different cards. Haven't too many left. Mario DeMarco, 152 Maple Street, W. Boylston, MA 01583.

Collector selling collection: Lots of books, posters, films, lobby cards, etc. Send S.A.S.E. for complete list to: Artic Lights Film Productions, c/o Stan Lusk, P.O. Box 687, Hayward, CA 94543-0687.

Large list of Movie Lobby Cards & Posters for sale. Send 50¢ in stamp or coin to: Lloyd Toerpe, 3389 Brookgate, Flint, MI 48507.

Old Time Radio Club, 100 Harvey Dr., Lancaster, NY 14086. Monthly newsletter, annual magazine, tape library. Mention this ad and you will receive membership for remainder of 1984 for only \$10.00.

Laurel & Hardy Fans: subscribe to Pratfall, a classy periodical devoted to the films, careers, and co-workers of the great comedy duo. Pictures. Reprints. Interviews. Each issue a collector's item. 4 issues, \$6.00. Mailed in envelopes \$7.00. Back issues available. Pratfall, P.O. Box 8341X Universal City, CA 91608.

Western Music Fans: I have a very large collection of transcriptions & radio show of Autry, Rogers, Ritter, Pioneers, Wills, etc. Tapes available. Send for free list. Jimmie Wilhelm, Star Route Box 165B, Burnet, TX 78611.

Beta Serials and Westerns: Interested in trading or mutual sharing with persons in Los Angeles area. J.C. Ray, 303 30th Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254.

# NEW BOOKS AND MAGAZINES AVAILABLE

Remember that all terms as listed in our catalog apply. If you do not have a copy of it please write us and we will send it. Our prices include the cost of sending you the item by insured mail to any destination in the U.S.A.

ALL ITEMS ON THIS PAGE CAN BE ORDERED FROM KIETZER PUBLISHING, BOX 3325, MANKATO, MN 56002

## KIETZER PUBLISHING CO. — OUR OWN NEWEST ISSUES:

**SERIAL WORLD #36** features Daredevils of the Red Circle, Ruth Roland, G-Men vs. The Black Dragon, A Tribute to Rod Cameron, Pearl White's Films, Dead End Kids in Serials, and more .....\$3.00  
**SERIAL WORLD #8 REPRINT** features Ace Drummond, Terry Frost, Ray "Crash" Corrigan, and the conclusion of the Superman serial .....\$3.00  
**SERIAL WORLD #9 REPRINT** features Marshall Reed Interview, The Great Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok (starring Wild Bill Elliott), Jungle Menace, and more .....\$3.00  
**FAVORITE WESTERNS #16** features Allan "Rocky" Lane, Anne Jeffreys, John Wayne's leading ladies, The Magnificent Seven, Tumbelweed Bob Baker, and convention reports .....\$3.00  
**MATINEE #1** features Rudolph Valentino, Charlie Chan, Tarzan, The Old Dark House, and more .....\$3.00  
**MATINEE #2** features Sherlock Holmes, Harry Langdon, Red Skelton, On The Beat, and more .....\$3.00  
**MATINEE #3** features Tarzan, On The Beat, Francis the Mule, My Little Chickadee, Jungle Jim, Brigitte Bardot, Marilyn Monroe, and more .....\$3.00

### DOWNEY PUBLICATIONS — NEW ISSUES

**UNDER WESTERN SKIES #25** features part 3 of the Charles Starett Filmography, and a special feature on the Hollywood Cowboy Goes To War. Published in September of 1983 (80 pages) .....\$3.00  
**UNDER WESTERN SKIES #26** features Charlotte Film Fair 1983, The Last Round-Up, Rand Brooks, Betty Burbridge, and more. Published in December of 1983 (80 pages) .....\$3.00  
**UNDER WESTERN SKIES #27** features Memphis Film Festival 1983, Films of George "Gabby" Hayes, Arkansas Slim Andrews, and more. Published in March of 1984 (80 pages) .....\$3.00  
**GOLDEN YEARS OF RADIO & TV #3** features Jimmie Grier, Hans Conried, Humphrey Bogart on Radio, Frances Langford, Andy Griffith, Radio Cliffhangers, and more. Published in fall of 1983 (54 pages) .....\$3.00  
**DOUBLE FEATURE #43** (new title for World of Yesterday magazine) features Universal's Aces of Action, Harold Russell, Films of 1946, and more. Published in February of 1984 (50 pages) .....\$3.00  
**CLIFFHANGER #3** features The Adventures of Sir Galahad, Black Arrow, The Broken Coin, Noel Neill, Richard Simmons, and more. Published in February of 1984 (52 pages) .....\$3.00

### NEW BOOKS ON SERIALS

**FIFTY YEARS OF SERIAL THRILLS** by Roy Kinnard is a 215 page clothbound hardcover book that contains a history of the motion picture serial. Five hundred American movie serials dating from the silent era to the late 1950's are comprehensively indexed, with each film's original year of release, number of individual weekly episodes, director, cast and alternate release and feature version titles. Fully illustrated with fifty photographs, the book also covers the serial's continuing influence on modern blockbusters like "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and the "Star Wars" epics. The author discusses several famous movie serials in critical detail, including Flash Gordon, Captain Marvel, Superman, and Batman. Published in 1983 by The Scarecrow Press .....\$18.00  
**ACTION PACKED CLIFFHANGERS** by Doug E. Nye is a 60 page viewer's guide designed to be a companion in the educational television series on serials by the same name. Illustrated with 30 photos, it contains a wealth of material on the series, the serials that are part of it, and those who made and starred in them. Published in 1938 by South Carolina Educational Television .....\$5.00  
**IN THE NICK OF TIME — MOTION PICTURE SOUND SERIALS** by William C. Cline is a 288 page clothbound hardcover book that offers a definitive history of serials, from Universal's 1930 "The Indians Are Coming" to Columbia's 1956 "Blazing the Overland Trail" with an appendix listing all serials 1930 to 1956: titles, releasing companies, chapter titles, directors cast. Includes 90 photos. Published in 1984 by McFarland & Company .....\$25.00

### OTHER MAGAZINES AND BOOKS

**WESTERN TRAILS #34** is the final issue of the fanzine published by Dick Kauffman from 1975 to 1983. Featured are Al "Fuzzy" St. John, Hopalong Cassidy, and more. It (along with the first 33 issues of Western Trails) is available from us, each for .....\$3.00

**ROY ROGERS HOMECOMING DAY** is a special 16 page booklet printed on glossy paper that was published by The Portsmouth Area Recognition Society which covers the special day for Roy — in photos and text — when he returned to his birthplace for the celebration in his honor on Sept. 6th, 1982. This booklet is available from us for .....\$3.00

**THE FRANKENSTEIN CATALOG** by Donald Glut is a 420 page hardcover book that contains a comprehensive listing of virtually everything in every type of media concerning the most famous monster of all time. Over 50 photos, this was published in 1984 by McFarland. Our price .....\$35.00

**BUSTER CRABBE — KING OF THE SERIAL ACES AND WESTERN ACTION** is a new large 8 1/2 x 11, 100 page book with over 100 photos, filmography, and biography. Put together and published by Mario DeMarco in 1984. Our price .....\$10.00  
**SUNSET CARSON PICTORIAL** by Bob Carman and Dan Scapperotti is a 32 page pictorial album packed full of photos of Sunset Carson. Published in 1984 in a limited press run — our price including postage .....\$6.00  
**SIX-GUN HEROES VIEWER'S GUIDE** is a companion to the PBS television series by that name — 60 pages packed with 27 short features (with photos) on the movies in that series. (Don't confuse this with the larger book **THOSE SIX GUN HEROES** by Douglas E. Nye which is a 142 page publication still available from us for \$11 per copy) — this smaller viewer's guide is available for only .....\$5.00

## VIDEO CASSETTE CLUB

Earlier this year we started our own Video Cassette Club and offered you a fine assortment of products from Discount Video which are still available through us. If you wish to receive a copy of that complete listing just write and we will send it.

Now we have added the following tapes manufactured by The Nostalgia Merchant, Inc. Terms and conditions remain the same. These tapes are offered on a non-returnable basis only. Replacement will be made for defective cassettes if they are promptly returned within ten days of your receipt of them and they will be replaced by copies of the same title — no refunds or exchanges are offered. Our prices are full and complete and include shipment via insured U.S. surface mail anywhere in U.S.A. Foreign orders or orders requesting special service such as Express Mail, First Class, Air Mail, etc. must include payment to cover those extra services.

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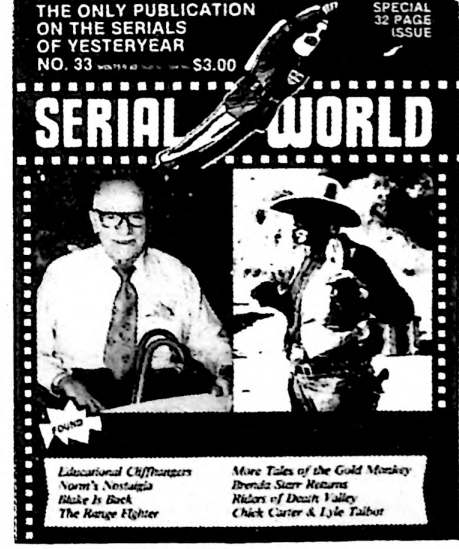
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## UNMASKING THE MASKED MARVEL By Peter Bosch

The term "Masked Marvel" certainly applies to Tom Steele, one of Hollywood's greatest stuntmen. His job was and is to double others, pretending to be them without any credit for himself. So "Masked Marvel" hits it right on the nose.

In my opinion, Steele contributed more thrills to the movie serial than any other person. He was with Republic for almost all of the studio's history, appearing in over one hundred roles in approximately fifty serials as well as doubling practically every male lead during the Forties and Fifties. He became head ramrod (stunt coordinator) for the last ten years of Republic's existence in the serial game. All the stunts (or "gags" as they are known within the industry) would be devised by him.

His busiest picture would have to be **THE MASKED MARVEL** (1943) in which he was always behind the mask, as well as doubling two of the leading men and appearing as a henchman in two different chapters.

My first contact with Tom Steele came a few years ago when I was writing a two-part article on serials for Video Action magazine. He kindly provided me with information about Republic. In November of 1982, I interviewed him in his Los Angeles home, where he lives with his wife Kay, for a newspaper article about his career. I found him to be courteous, intelligent and fairly modest, and I spent several enjoyable hours talking with him as well as looking over mementos of his career. Steele is still fairly trim, though not as blade-thin as he used to be, and he carries a youthful air about him. He was still working up until recently, and had the honor of being put in the Hollywood Stuntmen's Hall of Fame on February 25, 1981.

The interview provided many fascinating insights into the business of stunting, but due to the newspaper's space limitations I was only able to use highlights of the conversation. I present the full interview here.

Peter Bosch: We might as well start with the most obvious question: Is Tom Steele your real name?

Tom Steele: No, my real name is Skeoch. They couldn't spell it, couldn't pronounce it and the studio changed it.

PB: The first name is Tom, though?

TS: Yes.

PB: Where were you born and when?

TS: June 12th, 1909, in Scotland. I was two years old when we came across to this country, to New York. My dad was a construction consulting engineer, very successful in this country. Came out to San Francisco after the earthquake and did a lot of building and remodelling. He was with U.S. Steel for many years, built steel mills up north and a steel mill here in Torrance.

PB: What was your childhood like?

TS: Very happy, a very good childhood. I was a very fortunate young boy. My dad bought Shetland ponies for my brother and I.

PB: It all sounds rather well-to-do.

TS: Yeah. However, I went out to work when I was 14 years old. That was the thing to do. Most of the boys had to get jobs on the farms.

PB: That was your first job?

TS: No, my first job was in a steel mill, making nails. I went to work there as office boy. I kept pestering the foreman until in the mill and he gave me a job, and that summer I made nails.

PB: How did you break into the movies?

TS: I decided to come down to Los Angeles without mentioning to anyone that my ambition was to see what the motion-picture studios were like. I had participated in school plays in high school and in college, and a company had come to Palo Alto to do a commercial of the town and I was picked

as the young boy. It showed me arriving in town on the train, a farm kid. So that gave me a feeling that there was a chance I could do something in the picture business. This about about 1928. I got on the boat and came down to Los Angeles. My intention was to try Hollywood and get a job. If not, I could look up the city engineer who used to work for my dad. So I could hit him for a job or go to Torrance and work in a steel mill there, but I was really planning if I couldn't get a job in the picture business I was going to get on a steamship line. I had a girlfriend in college and her dad was the manager of the Panama-Pacific Steamship Lines, and I was going to get on as a dockhand and tour the world. So I went in to the Biltmore Hotel downtown and registered, got a room, came down and I was out on the street before I realized I didn't know how to get to Hollywood. I went to a policeman and he put me on a double-decker bus. The next thing I know, here's Fox Studios, then Warner Brothers Studios and Columbia Studios. And I saw all these cowboys out there so I jumped off the bus. I said, "This is great, it's just like my hometown." Now, I wanted to be recognized as a cowboy but here I'm all dressed up: a tie, a vest. And they're all standing around waiting for a call of a job. I didn't fit in here and I walked down to Warner Brothers. I looked in an office there with a sign up that said "Casting." I asked, "Is there anything doing today?", hoping he'd hire me as an actor or an extra but if he'd hired me as a carpenter or asked me what I could do, I would go in and sweep the street. Anything. He said, "There's nothing here today." So I left, walked down to Fox and saw "Casting." I went in and there were about twenty or thirty young fellows like myself, all dressed up, and about that many girls, so I stood in the crowd. Pretty soon, a fellow opened the gate and we went on a stage. The director and the others followed in, lined us up and I was the first one picked. It was a western with George O'Brien and Sue Carol, **LONG STAR RANGER**, and I was picked to dance the Bunyuhug with Sue Carol at a party at her home. I couldn't even do the square dance. But we had three or four days of rehearsals. We were sent to Western Costume to get dressed in western clothes and told to report to work the next day at eight o'clock. On the way out, I got talking to a fellow and he was a local boy and he had a car and it turns out he just rented an apartment, had twin beds and whatnot, so he drove me downtown and I got my suitcase and moved in with him. The next day at rehearsal they taught me how to do the Bunyuhug, and then I did a fight with George O'Brien and rolled down the steps because I cut in on his girlfriend and asked her for a dance. They asked if any of us could ride horseback, but none of them could. I played polo when I went to college, so I could. I went out on location and did chases with them. And my phone's ringing all the time, I thought I got it made. My next call was to go to M-G-M in a Norma Shearer picture on a polo team and they needed a fellow to hit a long drive up within a short distance of the camera, and none of these players could do it. They were picture boys, you know? To me, it was just another polo game. One of the wranglers had seen me out there playing around, so he told the director I could do it. The director told me to hit the ball up to that area, so I hit it up there and I took off and I was going to hit it again, towards the goal. And out comes a lady who falls right in front of me. My horse jumped over her. I came back, dismounted and went over to pick her up... and it's a guy. It's a stuntman. They didn't tell me he was going to do a fall. So then they put Norma Shearer in there and I picked her up. And, because of that, I worked about a month on that picture, at the home, at the swimming pool. So I got several jobs. Then my next was a screen test to play the lead in a series of westerns.

PB: At which studio?





TS: Selznick. They gave me a script and I did the test. A few days later, I was getting ready with my buddy to go up to Big Bear and my phone rang. The lady came on and she said, "You don't know me but I thought I would tip you off, Tom, I'm Selznick's secretary and they've been looking at the test and they've decided upon hiring you." So I just sat that whole weekend in that apartment waiting for that damn phone to ring! That Monday I called my agent and he checked on it and found out that George Duryea got it because his folks were theatrical people and had an in. And they changed his name to Tom Keene. That was the first disappointment in my life, because whenever I wanted anything I got it. Like during the Depression, I got a job on the Bay Bridge and it wasn't easy. I went to the unemployment office, they took everything down and I said, "When do I go to work?" They said, "Go to work? When we call you." I never got a job that way, so I went right to the job, to the superintendent and told him I was looking for work. It made an impression and he hired me. I went to work that night. But losing that screen test broke my heart. So I went home for the Christmas holidays, thinking they'll call me. They've been calling me like mad, and I left my phone number. This is now the real Depression and no calls. I couldn't get a job in my hometown because I'm living under the roof of my parents and my Dad is working. Only one man to a family would be working. Times were tough. Where I used to get jobs in a steel mill or a lumber yard, they couldn't hire me, there were too many men with families. So that's when I got the job on the Bay Bridge. I went into Oakland, the approach to the Bay Bridge and I worked in the tunnel. They had an explosion and it caved in. That's a long story, I won't go into that. I helped dig out four men that were buried in there. My boots were leaking and I thought I'd have to buy a new pair... the hell with it! I went and got my paycheck. I had forty dollars after I paid my hotel bill, got in my car and drove back to Hollywood. That afternoon, I checked into a little rooming place and went down to Santa Monica pier. They were shooting a picture there, and I ran into George DeNormand. I had known him before. He

lived around the corner from me, so he says to drop by. The next day I did and the phone rang and they sent him out on an interview to Warner Brothers to work on CAPTAIN BLOOD. I went out with him and he snuck me through the gate. They lined us up and here are a bunch of extras and they're all dressed up like pirates. And again here I'm dressed in a sweater, all dressed up. I was about the eighth picked and went to work the next day on CAPTAIN BLOOD as a stuntman. I actually wasn't a stuntman, I was an extra, but I went over to Stage 5 where the stuntmen were working and got acquainted with the fellows. They signed me off as a stuntman and told me to be back the next morning, so I worked on the picture for two more weeks as a stuntman. And I can remember my first stunt: They had me slide down the mast, under the sail, and it flipped me off the boat through the process screen. I knew that this was something wrong. So I picked myself up and ran to the boys' room. (LAUGHS) I hid for a couple of hours.

PB: Despite this experience, you still wanted to be a stuntman. And you got more and more into stunt work.

TS: I was doing acting jobs, but every one seemed to have a little action involved. I ended up doing the action. Pretty soon, there was more work as a stuntman than there was as an actor.

PB: Was there actually a moment when you said to heck with acting, I'm going to concentrate solely on stunting?

TS: Oh, yeah. I realized I wasn't going to make it as an actor, and I really had no desire to be an actor. When I started, nine of us were thrown together at Universal. We called ourselves "The Cousins" and they were the greatest bunch of fellows in the business. We had Dave Sharpe, Loren Riebe, Jimmy Fawcett and Kenny Terrell. They were acrobats, they had done circus shows. Dave Sharpe, of course, had a background in pictures, way back in his childhood. He was in OUR GANG comedies at Roach studios, he was in the Olympics. There wasn't a thing he couldn't do. Then there was Louis Tomei, Carey Loftin and Bud Wolfe. They were car men. Louis Tomei was a race driver at Indianapolis. Eddie

Parker and myself, that makes nine. Eddie and I were in college and we were horsemen. I got into westerns without any problem because of my ability with horses. Eddie was a good fight man. He doubled John Wayne, the Duke, and looked like him, walked like him, big like him. We made a good combination. We worked a great deal at Universal, mainly because they couldn't afford the oldtime stuntmen.

PB: Do you remember the serials you did at Universal?

TS: There was FLASH GORDON, BUCK ROGERS, RADIO PATROL, five or six others.

PB: Who did you double in FLASH GORDON?

TS: Charles Middleton.

PB: Ming the Merciless.

TS: Dale Van Sickel and I did one at Columbia, but I can't remember the name of it.

PB: That would have been BRUCE GENTRY. For some reason, people seem to think of you as primarily working for Republic, but you worked at other studios.

TS: Yeah, I did a lot at Universal. I worked on CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE for Warner Brothers, GUNGA DIN for RKO. Through Dave Sharpe, I got over to Republic on the serials. And then he went off and starred in a couple of westerns and I continued doing the serials.

PB: Practically everyone feels the Republic serials were the best around.

TS: Right. Photographically and so forth, they were never improved upon.

PB: How did Republic differ from the other studios?

TS: Well, Republic was geared to fast shooting. We'd get nine shots an hour. The majors had plenty of time. If they didn't get it today, they'd get it tomorrow.

PB: Would you say you were most active when the serials were at their height between 1936 and 1945?

TS: Yeah. We were doing four serials a year, fifteen episodes and twelve episodes, so that was the busiest time of my career. And in between we were doing all these eight or nine-day westerns. I worked steady.

PB: What was the average work week back then?

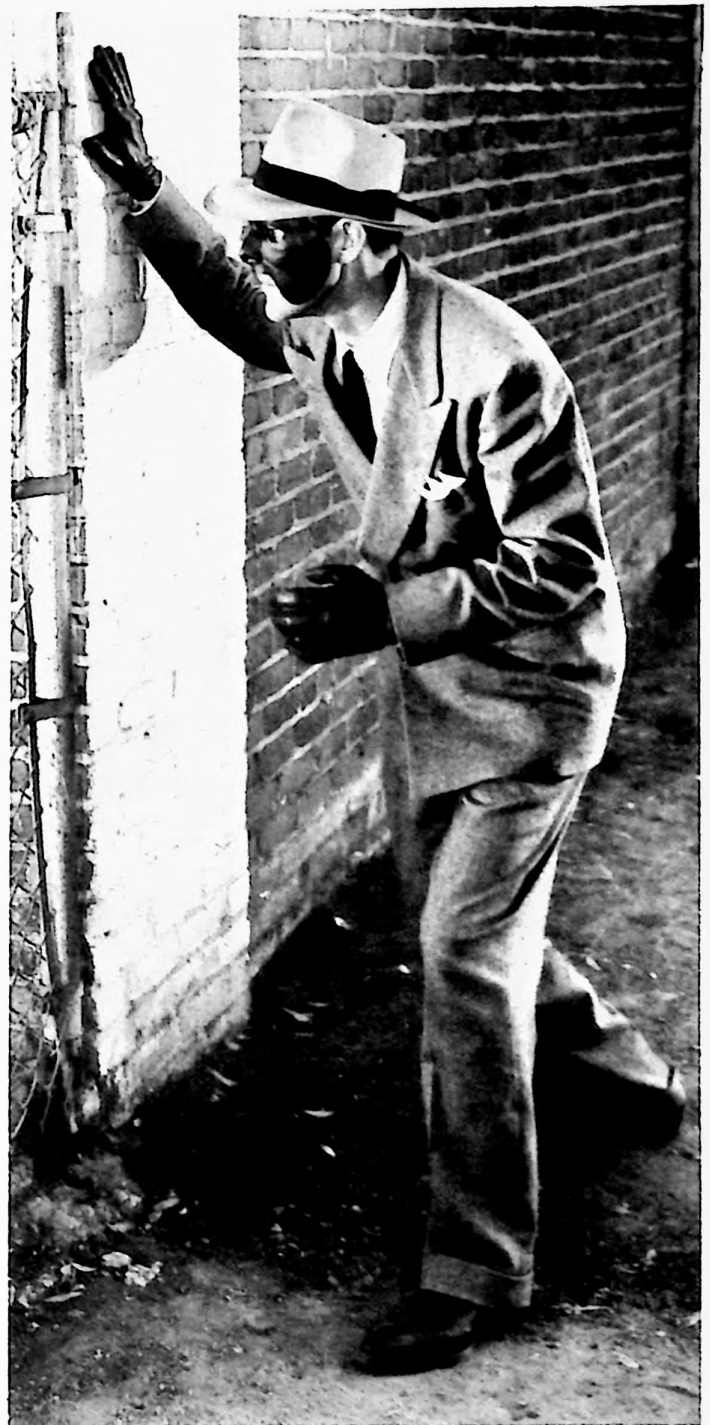
TS: Six days.

PB: How many hours a day?

TS: On the serials, we would work Saturday night until quite late. We worked long hours, but finally we got to where they would give schedules, what was to be done that day, and we wouldn't shoot anymore. That would be it. So we knew how fast to work and to finish.

PB: What would you say was your specialty?

TS: Mine ended up, more or less, to be horsemanship. I did everything. And some of the toughest stunts in the world, in horsemanship, is making a transfer to a tree branch, transfer to a back of a stagecoach or a buckboard. A buckboard, particularly, the way it bounces around. Another tough gag is the transfer from one speedboat to another. Speedboats, in order to pilot them or steer them, have to be planing and that means speed. You can't do the transfer in slow motion. It has to be going at a pretty good clip. In other words, you can't give them speed by undercranking the camera. The speedboat lays low in the water until you rev it up and when you get going, then it gets up on the water and it planes. Another problem you have when you overtake the other boat, you run into his wake, and you're much too far away on the outside of his wake to so you have to get on top of his wake. And the minute you get on top, you can't stay up there. The boat would go off to one side or the other. You've got to jump right now because if you wait too long and go on the inside of his wake and you miss your jump or you start your jump, you could fall in between the two boats and they're going to hit each other. So, of course, you have a hidden driver. You pilot



it until you get to your spot and he has his hand on the wheel. The minute you leave, he pulls the boat away. You can't hesitate and say, "One, two, three, go."

PB: When I look at that particular type of stunt in the old serials, I've noticed that when you leap, the men in the other boat aren't so much fighting you as they are pulling on you. So that helps, but it must still be dangerous.

TS: I did a lot of them, a lot of transfers. And even getting knocked off of a speedboat is rough if you hit that water just so. It's like cement. It can whip you over and really give you a bad time.

PB: What about when you're jumping from a cliff down onto a passing car? When I've seen it done, they usually cut from the jump to a closeup of the landing in front of a rear-projection screen. But what about the actual stunt where you're leaping and the car is moving?

TS: It's a very tough one. The same thing with jumping to

the top of a stagecoach. You don't jump down, you jump out. I did one on top of a station wagon; a Rod Cameron show...

**PB: SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA.**

**TS:** Yeah, and I jumped out in front of it and just made it. I almost went off the back and missed it. They're very difficult. To be out in front is a weird feeling.

**PB:** Especially when you realize it's too late to do anything else.

**TS:** I experienced through my career young fellows coming in, good athletes in college or out of the service, they come in and get busted up, only because they don't have the timing and coordination.

**PB:** It's almost a science. One thing I'm curious about is in regards to the people you would double. Who would decide who would double who?

**TS:** The producers or the directors would hire actors that we could double. Like at Republic, the producers had a mark on the door casing, my height, Dale Van Sickel's height and all the others. If the actor matched up to it, he got the job. We tried to be as much like the actor as possible so that the audience would never know there was a stuntman involved. It's not that the actor couldn't do it. Many an actor is well qualified. Kane Richmond was a great athlete and could do everything that Dave Sharpe or I did or any of us did, but they don't dare. If he got a cut or a black eye, we'd have to stop production. We'd all be out of work.

**PB:** Even Dave Sharpe had a double, Jimmy Fawcett, when he acted in *DAREDEVILS OF THE RED CIRCLE*. That

must have been frustrating for a stuntman not being able to do his own stunts.

**TS:** Well, you can't afford to take a chance. But believe me, a lot of them were very well qualified. Gary Cooper was great. And then greatest of all athletes, who killed himself with booze and women, was Errol Flynn. There was a terrific man. He was a good ringfighter, he was a great yachtsman, a good swimmer.

**PB:** But one major difference between the actors and stuntmen on serials, the stuntman would make more money.

**TS:** Oh, yeah.

**PB:** What was the average pay for a stuntman back then?

**TS:** Twenty-five dollars a day. I was under contract to them and when I did the serials I got five hundred a week, and more as time went on.

**PB:** How much did the actors get?

**TS:** They made a hundred and a half, two hundred.

**PB:** How close to the scripts did you follow in terms of fight sequences?

**TS:** They used to write the gags into the scripts, but finally they got to where they just put scene numbers and I would figure out the gag.

**PB:** Was there much problem in coming up with new ways to stage fights for each serial that came along?

**TS:** No, I was always prepared. I'd work it out sometimes with the set decorator or the prop man. We were so well organized that I knew what we were going to be doing two weeks down the line.

**PB:** But you had to do a fight or two —



*Two top stuntmen, Ken Terrell with harpoon to the Steele heart!*





**Tom and Dale Van Sickel battle in "The Masked Marvel"**

TS: Every episode. We had a fight almost every day. We used to have two fights sometimes, and we put our foot down and said no more of this. One fight a day. At the most.

PB: It was a rule you made?

TS: Yeah. Duke Green and I were pushing and fighting, that one where we're up on the tower...

PB: In episode one of THE MASKED MARVEL.

TS: ... And we said, "Hey, this is no good. We're not doing justice to either one of those fights." We wanted to do it right.

PB: Since it's been brought up, let's talk about THE MASKED MARVEL. You were in Marvel, you played a crook in two different chapters and you doubled some of the main actors. I've heard different stories, but I'm wondering why you didn't get any billing?

TS: Mainly because they wanted to disguise me. They didn't want anyone to know it was Tom Steele. I was doubling for one of those other characters. One of them was supposed to be the Masked Marvel. But the public didn't accept it that way. They made Tom Steele the Masked Marvel.

PB: Only in recent years. But I'm talking about before the public saw it. I mean the actual screen credits. You didn't even get billed on the second credit sequence with the other stuntmen.

TS: It was a slipup. I don't know why. It didn't mean anything to any of us if we got screen credit or not.

PB: You must have felt something, it was a starring role.

TS: I didn't even give it a thought. I was so busy working and doing my job.

PB: THE MASKED MARVEL was a serial with a wartime atmosphere, and this brings up another question. You never fought in World War II. Why was that?

TS: I could have gone in. In fact, I went down for a physical to go into the Marine Corps. I decided I might as well get into the photographic section with Bill Witney. And our producer was a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps. If I got in with that unit, I would continue with the training I wanted in motion pictures. Duke Taylor, another stuntman,

and I went down for our physicals and I passed it. The doctor asked if we had had any injuries or been in the hospital, and I thought they wanted this information because of insurance. I told them I had broken my back in the steel mill and he sent me to have x-rays. The x-rays showed that I had broken my back at one time. And at the time, the armed forces were having trouble with fellows with old injuries, particularly back problems, so that made me 4-F right away, disqualified me. They wouldn't take me in. I said, "No, I'm in good shape." He said, "I understand, but you have definitely broken your back. You're 4-F. But don't let that bother you. Just go back to the studio and start jumping off rooftops, falling off horses." But it made me so sick. I didn't come home for hours. I walked out to the street, went into a saloon and had a drink. I didn't even want to look at anyone. I didn't want anyone to see me.

PB: It was a time when if you didn't wear a uniform, people wondered about you and shunned you.

TS: Right.

PB: Not like now when nobody wants to get into uniform.

TS: That's right, but I sure did. And I would have gone in with fellows I knew. I got over it eventually.

PB: Making wartime serials like THE MASKED MARVEL, you must have felt a little pang.

TS: I did. Just yesterday, the fellows were talking at lunch about when they were in the service, and I had no part in their conversation. So there's still a hurt. I still feel bad about it.

PB: Let's move on to just after the war. It was around 1945 or 1946 that you became head of the stunt department.

TS: "Ramrod" is what they called me. I was more or less setting them up, particularly when Yak went on to directing.

PB: During most of the serials made in the early Forties at Republic, you appeared in three or four different spots throughout a serial. But towards the Fifties, you began to get down to one appearance.

TS: I couldn't do those other characters because I was doubling the leading man, staging and keeping busy. I did four serials a year. I did all the Red Ryders doubling Allan

“Rocky” Lane and Bill Elliot.

PB: You seemed to have done it all at Republic. Was there anything you would have liked to do that you never did?

TS: What I really wanted was to be a director. A second unit director, at least. And I did direct quite a bit of second unit, coordinated all of the action, but they weren't about to give me a job as a director when I was more of a key man in the position I had. Eventually they would have if they continued in the business, but they didn't and I lost out. Yakima became a director that way and that was through Bill O'Sullivan, our producer, and I was his right-hand man. He turned everything over to me, so he would have eventually given me the opportunity to direct. That's the only regret I have. But actually I'm just as well off because I'm still around and I've got my health, where Fred Brannon it was too much for him and he had a heart attack. He was a prop man until Bill O'Sullivan made a director out of him. And actually he'd have never got the serials made if it hadn't been for the cameraman and the rest of us. But we all had a job to do, we had to get the picture made, so we helped him.

PB: In addition to the serials, you also made a lot of feature pictures. Who were some of the big stars you doubled?

TS: Gary Cooper, Randolph Scott, Joseph Cotten. I did the fire sequence in *THE THING*, doubling Jim Arness. And that was the first time a person had been set completely afire.

PB: That would be about twenty years before they knew how to completely control it in *THE TOWERING INFERNO*. It's no wonder people are constantly amazed and in awe of stuntmen. As a matter of fact, I heard you had your own following, The Tom Steele Fan Club. How did it come about?

TS: I forgot who started it. A fellow going to USC and he wrote quite a few articles about me.

PB: Did it surprise you?

TS: Yeah, it did.

PB: Is the club still around?

TS: I don't know, I never hear anything. I never get anything from The Tom Steele Fan Club.

PB: Do you know how many films you've appeared in?

TS: I wouldn't even know how to start a guess. It's in the thousands, it's got to be. Particularly television. One day on each show, so it goes into the thousands.

PB: And you're still working. Yesterday, you were out on...

TS: *THE DUKES OF HAZZARD*. I was on the first unit. Usually, most of my work is with the second unit on action shows. There wasn't much to it. It was working with the principals and they had this shot of a tank coming down the street, and I drove it into the building of coins, and all the guards spread apart and got out of the way. I quickly backed out of there and took off down the street. That was the only action I did. What happens after that, I don't know, except that the leading lady jumped in her jeep and followed me. So that means another car chase.

PB: Will you be involved in that?

TS: No, I don't think so.

PB: Was the driving of a tank a new experience for you? I mean how does a person learn how to drive a tank?

TS: I've driven tanks a number of times. I drove one in Tucson, Arizona. I forget what show that was.

PB: And last week you were on *TALES OF THE GOLD MONKEY*. What happened in that one?

TS: I was there to assist in the staging and coordinating of a barroom brawl. I only worked two shots: one over my shoulder throwing a punch at the leading man, knocking him back out of the pool hall; and the next shot I worked in was on the floor on top of the leading man, and the cripple in the chair came in and hit me over the head with a stein of beer

and knocks me out. I was basically there to stage the fight and to teach the principal. I took him off to the side of the set and showed him a few punches, and how to pick the man up and throw him over the bar.

PB: On the stunts you're doing now, what do they pay?

TS: The minimum wage is \$289 a day.

PB: What about when you stage a scene like on *TALES OF THE GOLD MONKEY*?

TS: They gave me a hundred dollar adjustment for the day, and I worked five hours and I came home with nine hundred and some odd dollars that day.

PB: How do producers get ahold of you now?

TS: As always, they have my number, but for years we've had a call club, a switchboard service. It's open twenty-four hours a day and all the studios and all the big companies know we belong to it, so they put in a call for us through the exchange.

PB: I would think they would go with the younger stuntmen, as it actually is a young man's market out there.

TS: Yes. Quite a few directors and producers that have used me a great deal haven't wanted to for fear I would get hurt, don't want to be responsible for the show I get hurt on. But mainly everyone I worked with has either retired or passed on. So there are just a few that throw me a job once in awhile. Naturally, I don't do the tough stunts anymore, but they don't expect me to. I still have my timing and coordination, that's the important thing. Like on *THE DUKES*, I was carrying a crate of tomatoes to a truck and as I stepped out on the road, the heavies come racing down the street and I step back. And as I turn to continue, the sheriff comes driving along and I have to throw the tomatoes up in the air and get out of the way. Well, I can't do it when he's a block away from me. He's got to be pretty close, about six feet away. And I had to throw them up so it would match a shot where the first unit had a shot of the sheriff with a tomato in his face and tomatoes all over the windshield. So I had to hit the bullseye with the tomatoes and get out of the way in time. That's the timing and coordination I still have.

PB: It must get a little frightening.

TS: No, I've done it too long, I guess. I've never ever really been scared. You get too involved, too busy. It's hit me as late as the next day, however. I remember on time I drove a car off of Mulholland Drive up here, and it didn't bother me. The next day when I went to work I got so nervous that I had to pull over to the side of the road and sit for awhile.

PB: And this was while just driving to work.

TS: Yeah. So actually doing a stunt, you don't have time if you concentrate and work. I've been asked many a time what is the toughest stunt I've ever done. Well, they're all tough, I treat them that way; but as I say, you're mainly concentrating on what you're doing, you don't have time to get nervous and worry about it. I remember I was doing a commercial once for, I think, Goodyear Tires. I was to drive this truck and jam on the brakes and not skid them, right? The reason I had to stop at this crossing was because we had this stuntgirl crossing the street. She trips and falls in front of me. So I timed it a few times. I could see her up to a point and then I couldn't see her as she was going to the ground, because of the high radiator and hood. We timed it so I could come in at a pretty good clip and not skid the tires. I had to pull up real close to her, within a few feet. I got back ready for the shot. Darned if they don't come out with a firehose and wet the street down. So I went up to them and said, "What gives?" This is the old doublecross they used to use when I first started in the business, until we finally put our foot down.

PB: This was a secret only the director's known about. They haven't told the girl or yourself?

TS: Yeah. So I rehearsed it with a wet street, which is that

much tougher. But I had my mark where I would start applying the brake and where I had to stop. It was an experience, because the girl could fall facing me and I could straddle her but she was falling in front of me where the wheels are. When I did the shot, I jumped out of the car. I was about a foot away from her. After that was when I got nervous. But doing it, no.

PB: Even with doublecrosses like you just mentioned, you still go on with stunting. Why?

TS: Financially, I don't need any of it. It's just a shot in the arm to go working once in awhile. I don't have to work. My pension and my social security are more than I need. But I get really down in the dumps sitting around. If a person has worked in an office for years, punching a timeclock, day in and day out, then I can understand people being glad to retire at sixty-five, getting the hell away from it and never going back again. But my work is different every day. A different location, a different environment, different people. Even if you're doing the same kind of gag, doing another saddle fall or another fight, it's with different people. It's not only a challenge, it's interesting to compete and to do it. No matter how early the call is, you look forward to it. I keep saying it's like a shot in the arm. When I hit sixty-five, I retired for a year. I made a few trips. I swam. I bicycled. I deep-sea fished. And I got bored I had been turning calls down; then one day a guy called and asked me to go to Chicago. It was perfect. I worked on THE BLUES BROTHERS for a week, then I came home. And I was home about five days and they called me back again. Five times I made that trip.

PB: And you got hooked on working again. Now you're the exception, but what would you say is the average career span of a stuntman?

TS: It takes three to five years to get your foot in the business, and then you're good for another twenty years. There are exceptions. I worked with two yesterday: one has four more years to go and the other has six more years to go before they're sixty-five. They intend to continue working, but mostly acting or a little routine fight like I've been doing. So there's two right there, there must be another thirty in the business that are going to hit sixty-five.

PB: Have you ever thought about writing a book about your career?

TS: I've had fellows offer to help me with it, but I don't want to do that.

PB: Yakima Canutt wrote a book.

TS: There's a fellow who interviewed me a few weeks ago. He was writing a book on oldtime stuntmen.

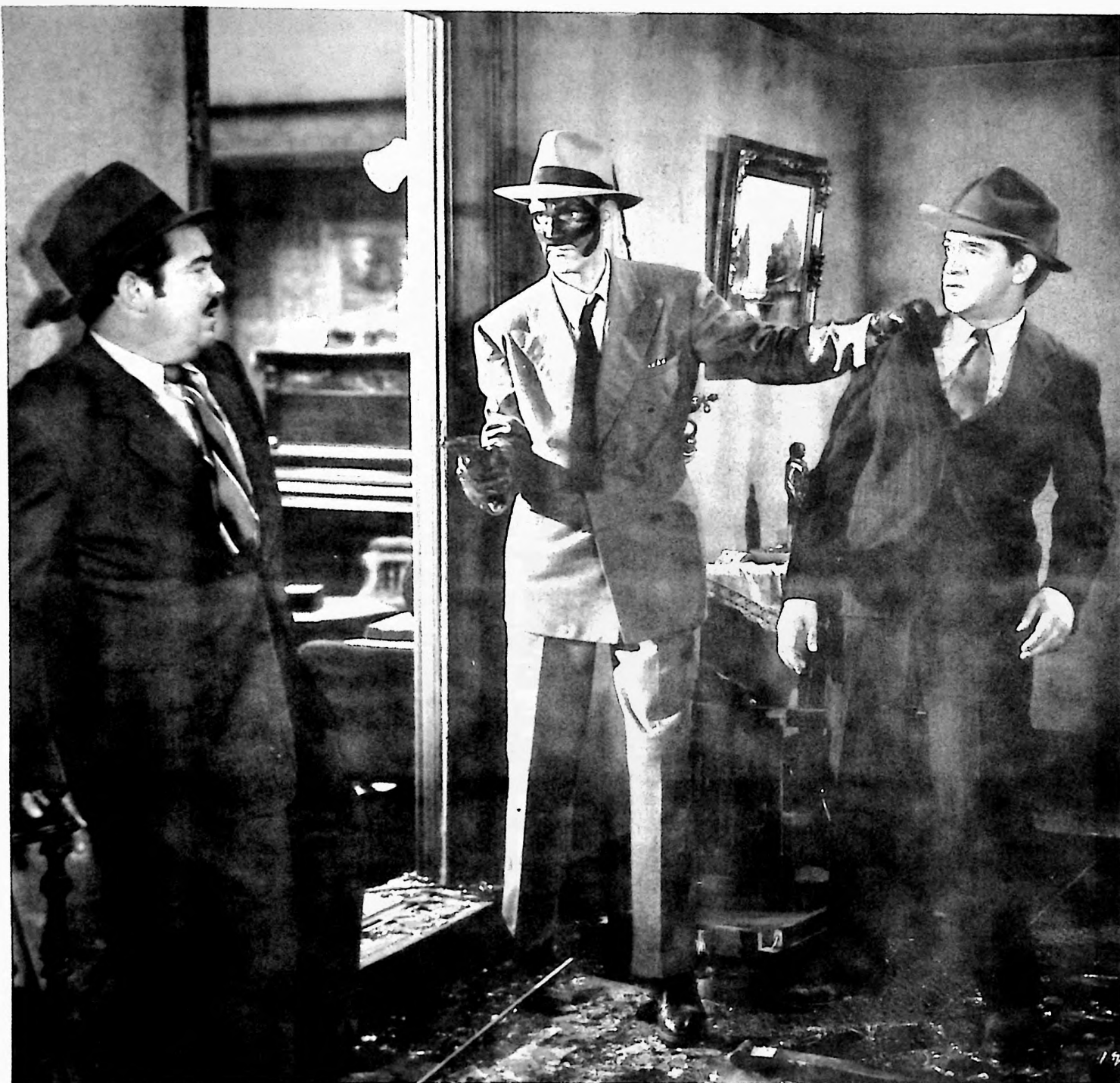
PB: Is it a depressing topic sometimes, oldtime stuntmen?

TS: Yeah. Who cares actually? Even the young stuntmen, they're impressed when they hear who you are, but they also stand back and say, "He isn't so good." You get that feeling. I hate to be like oldtimes. I remember when I was a young fellow and oldtimers would say, "It's not like it used to be. The good old days are gone." That used to burn me! It's what you make of it right now. It's up to the individual. But I'm being forced to say — and I shouldn't — it's a new ballgame. It has changed and it's not right. During my time, good times, twenty years ago or so, we worked together. We were like a big family, we helped one another. The prop man or the special-effects man did things for me without talking about it. And I would pick up a prop or a piece of equipment and carry it over to the next location. But it's all strong unions now. You can't do that anymore. We put this Fred Brannon over as a director because it was our job to get the picture made and



Hi Peter  
Sincerely  
Tom Steele





get out of there. We'd work and help one another. So those were the good days. Today, all they're interested in is money.

PB: Do you think stunts today are getting too dangerous?

TS: Yes, definitely. We were trained to do our stunts for the camera. After work every night, we would go in and look at the dailies, the things we did the day before. If something wasn't suitable to us or didn't go the way we planned it, we wanted to know why. We learned a lot of things. Instead of being knocked over a couch away from the camera, we found it was better to be knocked over the table or over the couch into the camera. So we learned all these angles and things. We worked for the camera. In recent years, I've noticed in the jobs I've been doing lately they're doing it for the audience around the camera, all the people that applaud them. And they're all out to outdo one another. Now when we did stunts, if for example there was a high fall and I was supposed to do it, I would take off the clothes and Dave Sharpe would put them on, because he was a better man at it. If I worked hard

that day, the next day Dale or somebody else would take the load. We worked together. But the stuntmen today are individuals. And they're very lucky there haven't been a lot more killed. A lot of them have been crippled up, but you don't hear about it. For a high fall, you could throw a dummy off.

PB: But you can always tell a dummy, the arms and legs going the wrong way.

TS: But they could perfect a dummy.

PB: Do you think stuntmen would go along with your suggestions. You could put a lot of them out of work.

TS: Oh, I would put a lot of them out of work if I was a director. The last serial we did was KING OF THE CARNIVAL and we had no stuntmen. I was the only stuntman on the whole serial, and I only did one or two stunts. The thing on the trapeze and falling off. I take that back, we had a few stuntmen, but all the actors did their own. The biggest problem with an actor was to make sure he only did what he was

told to do. They would get carried away a lot of the time in a fight. They would think they were so great and they would start playing around, and that's when they would get hurt.

PB: The young men today are careful from all I've heard.

TS: These tough stunts these boys are doing are out of this world, falling eighty-five or ninety feet. Of course, we didn't have the airpads at the time, but they're hard to hit.

PB: If you were a young man today, would you be doing any of these stunts in order to survive in the business?

TS: That they're doing? No. I've always tried to impress people that I'm a motion-picture/television stuntman. In other words, I think that's eliminating the daredevils like Evel Knievel and fellows who go around and do thrill shows. I'm not that type of a stuntman. A motion-picture stuntman is an engineer. We figure it out, routine it, stage it.

PB: You mentioned the other day about giving it all up, throwing the towel in, but since then you did **THE DUKES OF HAZZARD**.

TS: A shot in the arm again.

PB: Are you going to keep on going?

TS: I think so, until I get a feeling that I better not. I got a call the other day to see if I would be available December 1st. I said yes, if I'm still around. This is for Universal. I get thrilled.

PB: How does a stuntman want to die? On the job or what?

TS: We all want to go to bed and not get up, that would be nice. Whenever I hear of any of my buddies dying quickly of a heart attack or something, I don't feel as bad as I do for those poor people who linger on and suffer. Louis Tomei lost his life in a fight in a hull of a ship. He had hit his head, was alright and continued to finish the fight. Two weeks later went into a coma from a blood clot. So he died from the job. Jimmy Fawcett was on a motorcycle and hit a car coming home from work on Ventura Boulevard. Killed that way. Dave Sharpe was of Lou Gehrig's disease, very bad. Dale Van Sickel of a stroke, lingered on for two, three years. Miserable deaths, both of them. Out of that group of nine, there's only two of us left. Carey Loftin's retired now.



PB: Is there anything you'd like to do in pictures now before you give it up?

TS: Nothing. Nothing. I'll tell you, when I go out I have a different attitude than I used to have. I used to go in there and fight, but now I sit back and I watch the crew and I watch the actors and the stuntmen and I enjoy everything around me, the green trees, the leaves and the horses in the corral. I see everything now.

PB: You seem wonderfully content with life. But we all die sooner or later, it's inevitable. How would you like people to remember Tom Steele?

TS: Not as a great stuntman. Just as an everyday good American boy.

Since this interview, I have talked with this kind man on several occasions. The most recent meeting was for lunch in a Hollywood restaurant and he reminisced about how he used to eat there when he first arrived in Los Angeles. It was a very pleasant hour. He has announced his retirement from stunt work since the interview, but I get the feeling he may still return to give us all at least one more thrill.

THE END



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